

Portland Oregon
August 10th 1878

Dear Brother Ned.

Your letter has been laid away so long for a convenient opportunity that it was almost forgotten. I will begin at the beginning and answer questions the first few of which will be better answered by my "journal" which is herewith enclosed, and the next as to how I bored the holes is "an easy one".

I just went into the carpenter shop and got a "bit" which has a ^{steel} serrated point and it just filled the bill, and my blow pipe was a glass tube pointed and bent, a thing easily done in the flame of a candle. I have made a comparison of the list you sent me and the official record at the Hospital of Birds "personally identified" by Dr. McElderry.

As I suppose you want the list back I send it also. There is quite a number of water fowls &c beside other birds that he has down in the book and I will send a list of them soon. The magpie that I thought I had is in such a deplorable condition that I hesitate to send it. The worms & flies were not done with it after all and continued the havoc long after I had tied the "mess" up in a newspaper - died in their tracks.

The magpie seems quite numerous and as soon as I get some primers for my gun I will try to get you a specimen. We still have very warm weather here and fires in the woods are so extensive as almost to conceal the mountains opposite - only 7 miles away.

Every once in a while I regret that I am not inspired with a taste for ornithology for there is such a splendid opportunity here. I wish you could have a season at it.

We are quite anxious to see the new out of the house - hope it is not too expensive. The engraver ought to be able to improve on the drawing and if I had known that the photo. engraving was going to be so expensive I would have made a pencil drawing in a much better style. However it may turn out all right. Some of my photographic goods are here via the hand book which came by mail and it makes me quite anxious to get to work. The camera and other stuff will not be here for some time yet.

I have seen nothing of Indian news for some time now and really don't know what is going on but I guess there is not much doing in that line.

There is plenty of work here though and I have 14 men working at different places on root cellars, quarters &c. I want to fix up quarters enough so if there is any change

in the officers here - namely if our new First Lieutenant and Captain comes there will be good quarters for all. I will close now and Lillie and I will take these letters to the office for the walk as it is a lovely moonlight night. With much love to mother and ever yours affec

W. H. Willits

Memoranda

1. White crowned Sparrow

♂ - April 29 1878

Shot in low bushes - bushwood.

near Third and bridge

2. Meadowlark (?)

♂ April 29 1878 - Pine tree

3. Western Green Black Capped Fly catcher (?)

♂ April 29. Willows on bank of river fallen water.

4. Swamp Sparrow (?) (Leucophaeus purpureus.)

♀ May 4th 1878. Shot in aspen trees near marshy place. Pod full of white seeds, soft and just beginning to sprout.

5. Stellar's Jay

♂ May 4th 1878 Pine Trees

6. Northwestern Fish Crow (?)

♂ May 5th 1878 Head of valley (Powell)

This bird is rarely seen in this region.

#7. Sickle-bill Curlew's nest. 4 eggs
 Eggs lying in nest symmetrically ~~just like~~ ⁸⁸
 Nest exposed, built on ridge in marsh -
 Saw the bird rise from nest but did not
 get it. - May 6th 1878

#8. Sickle-bill Curlew
 ♂ May 7th 1878 Shot near nest and
 supposed to be one of the Sarah Birds. Fred Loosley

#9. Fox Sparrow(?) Pooecetes gramineus. "
 ♂ (?) May 7 1878

#10. Same as 9 "

#11. Red winged Blackbird
 May 7th. 1878 (Sex not known - skinned by Lt. Moore)"
 Abundant

#12. Yellow capped wood pecker
 ♂ (?) May 9th ^{Fir tree} Head, wings feet & tail. - Mountains "

#13. Thick Hatch - Head wings feet & tail
 ♂ (?) Mountains May 9th 1878

Red bellied 3.

#14. Thick Hatch Head, wings feet & tail. Fred Loosley
 ♀ May 9. 1878 Mountains.

#15. Sparrow Hawk
 ♀ May 9th 1878 Head of valley - occasional.

#16. ^{notent} Ruby crowned Sparrow(?) (Regiothis linaria)
 May 9th Mountains. Throat pied with
 soft white seeds or buds.

#20. "Mud Hen(?) nest" 6 Eggs (Fulica americana)
 Full complement 13(?) Marsh - May 14th 1878

#17. Mud hen (Fulica americana).
 ♂ May 13th 1878 Swamp. Reeds near
 nest. "20

#18. Yellow Headed Blackbird.
 ♂ May 13th 1878 Swamp. Numerous

Ms. Summer Yellow bird.

May 13th 1878. Numerous - Aspens trees.

Notes. On May 12th while on the plain or "flat" opposite Post about 3½ miles out and near the edge of timber, I found in a thorny bush or low tree a magpie's nest. Struggling up through the stiff wiry branches I looked in and saw four young, without a vestige of either down or feathers, and mouths like - well like young birds.

The nest was built of twigs of a dead pine tree that had been barked and whitened by weather. The nest was furnished with a kind of superstructure of the same material, forming a fine rustic lattice work above the nest, with an aperture in the top large enough to admit the parent birds. This super-

structure seemed like a defense against the marauders of the region - hawks - of which there is the Sparrow & chicken hawk the marsh harrier and owl. The fortification seemed quite adequate for the purpose that I supposed it to have been built for.

As it was Sunday I did not secure any birds
Prd. Knowledge above quoted.

Con. An injured shoulder strap and scratched hands.

21. Field Lark

♂ & ♀ and 4 Eggs May 27 1878
I noticed a truly singular thing in the female of this pair. On the under side from the breast to the tail (filium I guess I ought to say) there was a very broad stripe without feathers or down. This is probably the case with all females of this species at this season.

The pair is said to lay usually 4 eggs which are brought to me with the

accompanying birds as parents. The eggs are surely Parks eggs but further I would not touch. In dissecting the females to observe the ovary I noticed quite a large and unusual bulk in the back part of the body. I opened it carefully and took out an egg, full size and nearly ready to be expelled, without the shell however. There was also one about half size in the ovary and others smaller.

~~not sent~~ D. Mother and one Egg. Quite small.
♀ May 25" 1878

Found in a mortise in the frame of Goosley's Barn. The mortise was too deep and narrow to the bird with the hand and in getting the bird off with a forked stick the mother coughed so fiercely as to break 3 eggs - it is nest

Will write again by next
mail - yours &
Willis Kittich
L. L. to mother

Dear Brother Fred.

Fort Klamath Oreg.
Sept. 10" 1878

I have a few minutes to spare and will try to answer the questions put in your letter. 1 - then I do not know that the Green Black-capped Flycatching Warbler is a permanent resident. How I happened to mark it so I do not remember. The mark certainly was an error for I do not know anything about it. It will be safe to leave it out. 2 - The Hospital list does not mention hummingbirds.

3 The "White Brane" you have no doubt by this time. 4 The Ruby Crowned Sparrow so called was a very poor skin and as I remember it was a brown color with the head and neck slightly tinged

(*Aegiochus liraria* B. & M.)

with a ruby color. The white pelican is said to visit the lake - indeed there is a large bay on the other side of the lake called Pelican Bay. I have never seen any there but did see one or two on Tule Lake when I was at the Lava Beds with Mrs Howard. Of course I can not be certain but it was a very large white bird swimming majestically away out on the lake and it was agreed by all who saw it that it was a Pelican. It must have been as large or larger than a Goose. (A.B. The Goose may have been at the vertex of the visual angle). I will send by next mail the Hospital List. Mr Brushaw showed me a splendid specimen of Goshawk that he shot somewhere about within a radius of 200 miles. My information in this letter is certainly the reverse of accurate but then you know I am not a naturalist.

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About the end of May or early in June I again visited the Magpie's nest. The branches supported here and there clubs such as boys would use to club a chestnut tree by day or an apple tree by night. They appeared to have been thrown or dropped into the tree. The nest was empty, ~~and~~ the bird had flown! One of the young ones did not fly far, for hanging near the nest in the branches I found a mutilated skin. The head, wings, feet and tail hanging together by shreds. I secured the remnants, coming in last of a lot of "birds of prey". First the destroyer of the nest, then the fester fly, then the patient worm, after which man! What a train of vultures. Hee they laugh best who laugh last and I

Secured at first skin without the skinning.

Sittidae - Sitta - Birds on Hospital list
not among birds sent.

Slender-billed Nuthatch: S. canad. coronatus var. aculeatus June 75

Strigidae

Great Horned owl —

Long Eared Owl - Ouletes auratus Aug 16 1875

Cathartidae

Turkey Buzzard - C. aura

Columbidae

Carolina Dove - May 2" 1875

Gallinace

Dusky Grouse - T. obscurus

Sage Cock - Cock of the Plains - Laramie & vicinity

Common Sharp Tailed Grouse - P. phasianellus - var. Colum.

Ruffed Grouse - B. rufibellus - var. nubilosides

~~Fort Klamath Oregon~~

Thanksgiving Day 1878

Dear Brother Fred.

Lilie began the copying of thy "water birds" from the hospital list but the book was so large and unwieldy that she did not get very far. I took hold and the long promised list is at last forthcoming.

I have added a list of the "Gallinae" which may be of use to you. I wrote them in a hurry but your familiarity with the names of all these things will help where my writing or spelling are at fault.

Besides the book may not have been accurate as McElderry wrote at villainous hand and the Steward may have copied wrong. Errors however would only be in a letter or two not in the whole name. If McElderry something like that was his signature though he wrote his German exercises just like copper plate. We had a young Jack rabbit brought us and were going to send it to you

Since the last lot of birds sent you we have
secured you two Magpies. Lillie wrote the
late and I have no memorandum. They
are in abundance yet and breed here
as one of my notes says. Geese are
in great abundance in the sloughs at
the head of the lake but during this
clear weather are very shy cannot get
a shot they tell me. We have not
been able to get much done this winter
so far but after every one gets completely
settled we will get to work. I have
to work harder since the new Post Commander
comes. We have real splendid
neighbors who are very thoughtful and
considerate. We have got a shade
over driving mules now and drive a nice
pair of horses. There are two nice teams
one of black horses and the other Gray and
sorrel. Think of the sleighing oh ~~poor~~
disciple of Esculapius. Good night now
and Lillie joins in much love
Your affectionate son
Lillie Wittich